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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 000657

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR U/S ROOD AND GLOBAL INITIATIVE DELEGATION

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KGIC](#) [KNNP](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN/GLOBAL INITIATIVE: SCENESETTER FOR THE VISIT
OF U/S ROOD (16-18 JUNE)

MADRID 00000657 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: CDA James Dudley for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. Embassy Madrid warmly welcomes your visit to Spain. Although your relatively short time in Madrid will be taken up with events surrounding the fourth plenary session of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, it will provide a key opportunity to highlight the importance we place on the U.S.-Spain relationship in the field of nonproliferation and counterterrorism. Spain is an important friend and ally of the U.S., and we value its cooperation. Spain is a member in good standing of all major nonproliferation organizations and regimes and understands the importance of international cooperation in our joint efforts. The fight against terrorism, narcotics, and human trafficking forms the cornerstone of our bilateral relationship, and Spanish troops are carrying out important missions in countries such as Afghanistan and Lebanon. Spain has long fought a domestic terrorist threat from the Basque terrorist group ETA and suffered tragically from Islamic extremist terrorism in the 2004 Madrid train bombings. We have a great deal in common when it comes to counterterrorism and law enforcement, and we need to be innovative in finding new and improved avenues for bilateral cooperation with a trusted multilateral ally against the common threats we face.

Spain is a great believer in the Global Initiative and has eagerly awaited the chance to demonstrate its commitment by hosting this plenary session. We believe you will find Secretary of State Angel Lossada (Deputy Foreign Minister) and his MFA nonproliferation and arms control team eager to hear your thoughts on ways we can further broaden and deepen our bilateral cooperation. END SUMMARY.

//COUNTERTERRORISM//

12. (C) Spain is an al-Qaeda target and a critical player in U.S.-EU counterterrorism efforts due to its proximity to the Maghreb and a population that includes more than one million Muslims, mostly immigrants. Senior Al-Qaeda leaders often call for attacks to recapture the medieval "Al Andalus," and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco are a fixation for some extremists. On March 11, 2004, Madrid suffered bloody train bombings perpetrated by Islamic extremists. The Spanish government considers the threat from Islamic terrorism to be one of its top national security priorities and has identified numerous Islamic extremist groups operating within its borders. The Spanish are actively pursuing Islamic extremism terrorism-related investigations and have scores of suspects in jail. Public

opinion polling shows nearly three quarters of Spaniards are worried about the threat of Islamic fundamentalism, more than in the U.S. or Europe as a whole.

13. (C) Bilateral cooperation is strong. Spain pursues an aggressive agenda in law enforcement, judicial, and information-sharing efforts, at least with us. One example is the HSPD-6 agreement we signed in 2007 to facilitate the sharing of information between our national counterterrorism authorities. Spain participates in the Container Security Initiative (in the ports of Algeciras, Barcelona, and Valencia) and the Megaports Initiative to detect radioactive cargo (in the port of Algeciras with anticipated expansion to Barcelona and Valencia next year). Spain also is a founding member of the Proliferation Security Initiative and has participated actively during its five-year existence. Spain is a great believer in the Global Initiative and has been at the forefront of efforts to expand membership.

//POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CLIMATE//

14. (C) President Zapatero's center-left Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) was the victor in the March 9 general election. Zapatero's new cabinet includes Spain's first-ever female Minister of Defense, Carme Chacon. Miguel Angel Moratinos remains in place as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and his former DG for Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Arms Control, Angel Lossada, has moved up to the number two slot. Although Lossada does not agree with every aspect of U.S. CT policy, he has shown himself in the past to be a reliable interlocutor for this Embassy and has emphasized the role of international cooperation in the fight against violent extremism. Lossada worked hard to ensure Spain played a key role in international nonproliferation regimes and his office

MADRID 00000657 002.2 OF 002

did a great deal to support U.S. actions on Iran and within the Global Initiative. He speaks decent English and has been willing in the past to organize MFA roundtables on CT for high-level USG visitors such as S/CT Coordinator Dell Dailey.

He met on June 10 with visiting USAFRICOM Commander General Ward. In his new position as Deputy Foreign Minister, Lossada will be the only career diplomat among the four key advisors on FM Moratinos' leadership team. The principal opposition party remains the center right Popular Party (PP), but it is going through a leadership crisis. The Spanish public is skeptical of U.S. foreign policy but supportive of good bilateral relations.

15. (SBU) Spain has enjoyed one of the fastest growing economies in Europe, but growth is slowing significantly. A housing boom that had contributed greatly to growth for several years ended abruptly last year, and prices are stagnating, construction slowing, and unemployment and inflation rising. U.S. investment has long been important to the economy (more so than bilateral trade), but the tables have turned. In 2007, Spain was the fourth largest foreign investor in the U.S., with particular emphasis in banking, construction, and renewable energy.

//GENERAL MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC COOPERATION//

16. (C) Spanish military cooperation is important to the U.S. The southern Spanish bases of Rota and Moron are strategic hubs, midway between the U.S. and theaters of operation in Afghanistan and Iraq. U.S. planes and ships account for over 4,000 flights and 250 port calls a year in Spain. Although the Zapatero government has imposed a ceiling of 3,000 on troop deployments, Spain has troops in Lebanon (soon to be more than 1,100), Afghanistan (750), Kosovo (500), Bosnia (260), and a smattering of others in various UN & EU observer missions. Elsewhere on the diplomatic front, Spain in recent years has more often been a follower than a leader, looking to stay within EU consensus on issues such as Iran and missile defense. Spain has yet to recognize Kosovo and is so far refusing to train or fund Kosovar security forces.

Nonetheless, its commitment to KFOR remains firm. Spain is supportive of U.S. efforts towards Middle East peace. Driven by the twin threats of terrorism and illegal immigration, Spain is also increasing its engagement with the countries of North and Western Africa. Spain invests heavily in Latin America and wields significant influence there. Like the U.S., Spain wants strong democratic and free market institutions in the region. We have sharply differing views on Cuba. Spain believes it can encourage change via engagement. We take every opportunity to remind the Spanish that the Cuban regime is only interested in survival and that Cuban dissidents need and deserve the active and visible support of democracies everywhere. On Venezuela, the Socialist government's early efforts at constructive engagement with Chavez have gone sour. Nevertheless, Spain appears to be going ahead with the sale of four ocean-going patrol ships and four Coast Guard-type high seas patrol ships (plans to sell aircraft to Venezuela were scuttled when the U.S. objected to the transfer of U.S. technology in the aircraft).

//CONCLUSION//

17. (U) Again, we are looking forward to your visit. As the second Zapatero government gets underway, we need to set the stage for ever-improving cooperation in the fight against terrorism and WMD proliferation. We face common threats; the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, law enforcement and military services are capable, and Spain sits in a strategic location. There is much we can do together.
Dudley